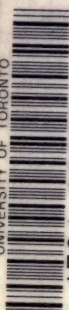


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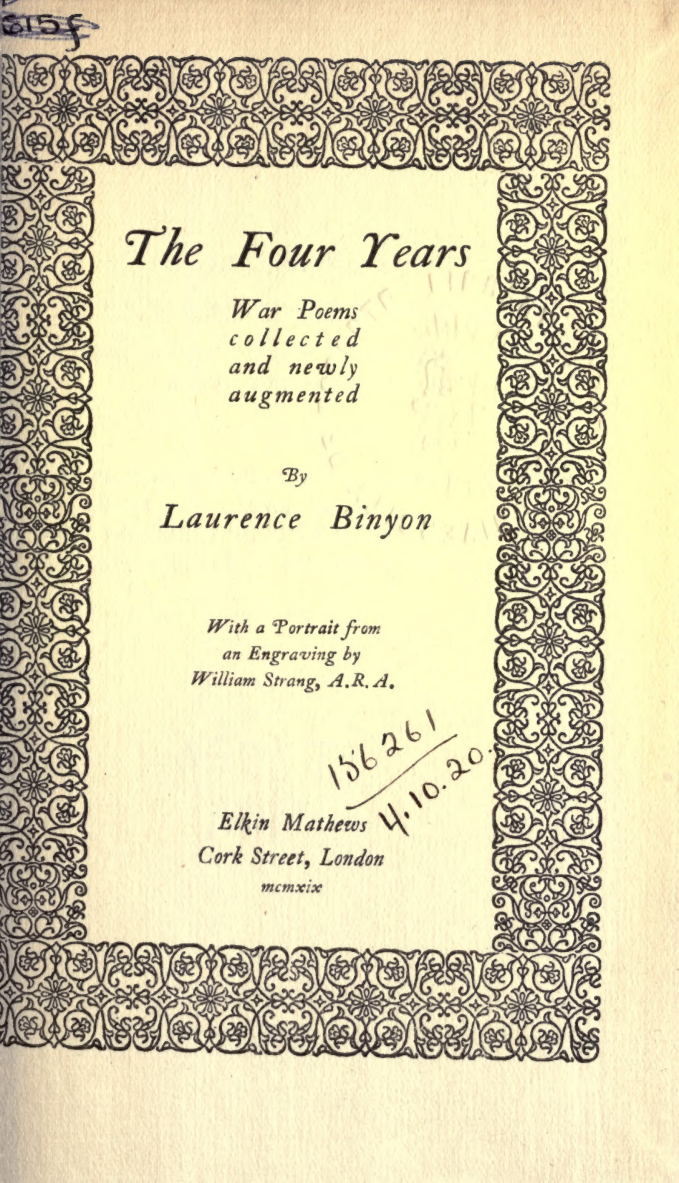


*Laurence Binyon*  
*from an engraving by William Strang A.R.A.*

*Emery Walker Lith.*



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# *The Four Years*


*War Poems  
collected  
and newly  
augmented*

By

*Laurence Binyon*

*With a Portrait from  
an Engraving by  
William Strang, A.R.A.*

156261  
4.10.20  
*Elkin Mathews  
Cork Street, London  
mcmxix*



*Second Edition*

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1919



DEDICATED TO  
RICHARD HENRY POWELL

2ND LIEUT., CINQUE PORTS BATTALION,  
ROYAL SUSSEX REGIMENT

IN MEMORY.

STRONG, LOYAL-SOULED, FULL-HEARTED, BLITHELY  
BRAVE,  
ONLY REMEMBERING LOVE KNOWS ALL HE GAVE :  
BEAUTIFUL BE THE STARS ABOVE HIS GRAVE.

BY THE SAME WRITER

ODES

LONDON VISIONS

THE WINNOWING-FAN

THE ANVIL

THE NEW WORLD

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## PRELUDES





# EUROPE MDCCCCI

## TO NAPOLEON

SOARS still thy spirit, Child of Fire?  
Dost hear the camps of Europe hum?  
On eagle wings dost hover nigher  
At the far rolling of the drum?  
To see the harvest thou hast sown  
Smilest thou now, Napoleon?

Long had the world in blinded mirth  
Or suffering patience dreamed content,  
When lo! like thunder over earth  
Thy challenge pealed, the skies were rent:  
Thy terrible youth rose up alone  
Against the old world on its throne.

With shuddering then the peoples gazed,  
And such a stupor bound them dumb  
As those fierce Colchian ranks amazed

## EUROPE MDCCCCI

Who saw the youthful Jason come,  
And challenging the War-God's name  
Step forth, his fiery yoke to tame.

He took those dread bulls by the horn,  
Harnessed their fury to his will,  
And in the furrow swiftly torn  
The dragon's teeth abroad did spill :  
Behold, behind his trampling heel  
The furrow flowered into steel !

A spear, a plume, a warrior sprung—  
Arm'd gods in wrath by hundreds ; he  
Faced all, and full amidst them flung  
His magic helmet : instantly  
Their swords upon themselves they drew,  
And shouting each the other slew.

But no Medean spell was thine,  
Napoleon, nor anointed charm ;  
Thy will was as a fate divine  
To wavering men who watched thine arm  
Drive on through Europe old thy plough.  
The harvest ripens even now !

Time's purple flauntings, king and crown,  
Old custom's tall and idle weeds,  
Were tossed aside and trampled down,  
While thou didst scatter fiery seeds,  
That in the gendering lap of earth  
Prepared a new world's Titan birth.

Then in thy path from underground,  
Where long benumbed in trance they froze,  
The Nations, giant forms unbound,  
Slow to their aching stature rose ;  
And through their wintry veins again  
Slow flushed the streams of life in pain.

Thy thunder, O Napoleon, passed,  
But these whom thou hadst stirred to life,  
On them the imperious doom was cast  
Of inextinguishable strife.  
For peace they long, but blood and tears  
Still blinded the tempestuous years.

A hundred years have flown, and still  
For peace they pine ; peace tarries yet.  
These groaning armies Europe fill,

And war's red planet hath not set.  
O mockery of peace, that gnaws  
Their hearts for so abhorred a cause !

Is peace so easy ? Nay, the names  
That are most dear and most divine  
To men, are like the heavenly flames  
That farthest from possession shine.  
Peace, love, truth, freedom, unto these  
The way is through the storming seas.

Ye wakened Nations, now no more  
You battle for a monarch's whim ;  
The cause is now in your heart's core,  
Your soul must strive through every limb ;  
They who with all their soul contend  
Bear more, but to a nobler end.

Be patient in your strife ! And thou,  
O England, dearer than the rest ;  
England, with proud looks on thy brow,  
England, with trouble at thy breast,  
Seek on in patient fortitude  
Strong peace, most worthy to be wooed.

Take up thy task, O nobly born !  
With both hands grasp thy destiny.  
Easy is ignorance, easy scorn,  
And fluent pride, unworthy thee.  
Grand rolls the planet of thy fate :  
Be thy just passions also great !

Turn from the sweet lure of content,  
Rise up among the courts of ease ;  
Be all thy will as a bow bent,  
Thy sure oncoming like thy seas.  
Purge clear within thy deep desires  
To be our burning altar-fires !

Then welcome peril, so it bring  
Thy true soul leaping into light ;  
A glory for our mouths to sing  
And for our deeds to match in might,  
Till thou at last our hope enthrone  
And make indeed thy peace our own.

JANUARY, 1901.

## THE BELFRY OF BRUGES

KEEN comes the dizzy air  
In one tumultuous breath.  
The tower to heaven lies bare ;  
Dumb stir the streets beneath.

Immeasurable sky  
Domes upward from the dim  
Round land, the astonished eye  
Supposes the world's rim.

And through the sea of space  
Winds drive the furious cloud  
Silent in endless race ;  
And the tower rocks aloud.

Mine eye now wanders wide,  
My thought now quickens keen.  
O cities, far descried,  
What ravage have you seen



Of an enkindled world ?  
Homes blazing and hearths bare ;  
Of hosts tyrannic hurled  
On pale ranks of despair,

Who fed with warm proud blood  
The cause unquenchable,  
For which your heroes stood,  
For which our Sidney fell ;

Sidney, whose starry fame,  
Mirrored in noble song,  
Shines, all our sloth to shame,  
And arms us against wrong ;

Bright star, that seems to burn  
Over yon English shore,  
Whither my feet return,  
And my thoughts run before ;

Run with this rumour brought  
By the wild wind's alarms,  
Dark sounds with battle fraught,  
Menace of distant arms.

O menace harsh, but vain !  
For what can peril do  
But search our souls again  
To sift and find the true ?

Prove if the sap of old  
Shoots yet from the old seed,  
If faith be still unsold,  
If truth be truth indeed ?

Welcome the blast that shakes  
The wall wherein we have lain  
Slumbering, our heart awakes  
And rends the prison chain.

Turn we from prosperous toys  
And the dull name of ease ;  
Rather than tarnished joys  
Face we the angry seas !

Or if old age infirm  
Be in our veins congealed,  
Bow we to Time, our term  
Fulfilled, and proudly yield.

Not each to each we are made,  
Not each to each we fall,  
But every true part played  
Quickens the heart of all

That feeds and moves and fires  
The many-peopled lands,  
And in our languor tires,  
But in our strength expands.

For forward-gazing eyes  
Fate shall no terror keep.  
She in our own breast lies :  
Now let her wake from sleep !

## THUNDER ON THE DOWNS

WIDE earth, wide heaven, and in the summer  
air

Silence ! The summit of the down is bare  
Between the climbing crests of wood ; but  
those

Great sea-winds, wont, when the wet South-West  
blows,

To rock tall beeches and strong oaks aloud  
And strew torn leaves upon the streaming cloud  
To-day are idle, slumbering far aloof.

Under the solemn height and gorgeous roof  
Of cloud-built sky, all earth is indolent.

Wandering hum of bees and thymy scent  
Of the short turf enrich pure loneliness :

Scarcely an airy topmost-twining tress  
Of bryony quivers where the thorn it wreathes ;  
Hot fragrance from the honeysuckle breathes ;  
And sweet the rose floats on the arching briar's  
Green fountain, sprayed with delicate frail fires.  
For clumps of thicket, dark beneath the blaze  
Of the high westering sun, beset the ways

## THUNDER ON THE DOWNS 13

Of smooth grass, narrowing where the slope runs  
steep

Down to green woods, and glowing shadows keep

A freshness round the mossy roots, and cool

The light that sleeps as in a chequered pool

Of golden air. O woods, I love you well,

I love the flowers you hide, your ferny smell ;

But here is sweeter solitude, for here

My heart breathes heavenly space ; the sky is  
near

To thought, with heights that fathomlessly  
glow ;

And the eye wanders the wide land below.

And this is England ! June's undarkened green

Gleams on far woods ; and in the vales between

Grey hamlets, older than the trees that shade

Their ripening meadows, are in quiet laid,

Themselves a part of the warm, fruitful ground.

The little hills of England rise around ;

The little streams that wander from them shine

And with their names remembered names en-  
twine

Of old renown and honour, fields of blood

High causes fought on, stubborn hardihood

For freedom spent, and songs, our noblest pride,

## 14 THUNDER ON THE DOWNS

That in the heart of England never died  
And, burning still, make splendour of our tongue.  
Glories enacted, spoken, suffered, sung !  
You lie emblazoned on this land now sleeping ;  
And southward, over leagues of forest sweeping,  
White on the verge glistens the famous sea,  
That English wave, on which so haughtily  
Towered her sails, and one sail homeward bore  
Past capes of silently lamenting shore  
Victory's dearest dead. O shores of home,  
Since by the vanished watch-fire shields of Rome  
Dinted this upland turf, what hearts have ached  
To see you far away, what eyes have waked  
Ere dawn to watch those cliffs of long desire  
One after one rise in their voiceless choir  
Out of the twilight over the rough blue  
Like music ! . . .

But now heavy gleams imbrue  
The inland air. Breathless the valleys hold  
Their colours in a veil of sultry gold  
With mingled shadows that have ceased to  
crawl ;  
For far in heaven is thunder ! Over all  
A single cloud in slow magnificence  
Climbs like a mountain, gradual and immense  
With awful head unstirring, and moved on



## THUNDER ON THE DOWNS 15

Against the zenith, towers above the sun.  
And still it thickens luminous fold on fold  
Of fatal colour, ominously scrolled  
And fleeced with fire ; above the sun it towers  
Like some vast thought quickening a world not  
ours

Remote in the waste blue, as if behind  
Its rim were splendour that could smite us blind,  
So doom-piled and intense it crests heaven's  
height  
And mounting makes a menace of the light.

A menace ! Yes, for when light comes, we fear.  
Light, that may touch, as the pure angel-spear,  
Us to ourselves, make visible, make start  
The apparition of the very heart  
And mystery of our thoughts, awaked from under  
The mask of cheating habit, and to thunder  
Bare in a moment of white fire what we  
Have feared and fled, our own reality.

And if a lightning now were loosed in flame  
Out of the darkness of the cloud to claim  
Thy heart, O England, how wouldst thou be  
known  
In that hour ? How to the quick core be shown

## 16 THUNDER ON THE DOWNS

And seen ? What cry should from thy very soul  
Answer the judgment of that thunder-roll ?

I hear a voice arraign thee. “ Where is now  
The exaltation that once lit thy brow ?  
Thou countest all thy ocean-sundered lands.  
Thou heapest up the labours of thy hands,  
Thou seest all thy ships upon the seas.  
But in thy own heart mean idolatries  
Usurp devotion, choke thee and annul  
Noble excess of spirit, and make dull  
Thine eyes, enfleshed with much dominion.  
Art thou so great and is the glory gone ?  
Do these bespeak thy freedom who deflower  
Time, and make barren every senseless hour,  
Who from themselves hurry, like men afraid  
Lest what they are be to themselves betrayed ?  
Or those who in their huddled thousands sweat  
To buy the sleep that helps them to forget ?—  
Life lies unused, life in its loveliness !  
While the cry ravens still, ‘ Possess, Possess ! ’  
And there is no possession. All the lust  
Of gainful man is quieted in dust ;  
His faith, his fear, his joy, his doom he owns,  
No more ; the rest is parcelled with his bones,  
Save what the imagination of his heart

## THUNDER ON THE DOWNS 17

Can to the labour of his hands impart,  
Making stones serve his spirit's desire, and  
breathe.

But thou, what dost thou to the world bequeath,  
Who gatherest riches in a waste of mind  
Unto what end, O confidently blind,  
Forgetful of the things that grow not old  
And alone live and are not bought or sold ! ”

Speaks that voice truth ? Is it for this that great  
And tender spirits suffered scorn and hate,  
Loved to the utmost, poured themselves, gave all  
Nor counted lost, spirits imperial ?

Where are they now, they that our memory  
guard

Among the nations ? Shall I say, enstarred  
And throned aloof ? No, not from heavens of  
thought

Watching our muddled brief procession, not  
Judges sublime above us, without share

In our thronged ways of struggle, hope, despair,  
But in our blood, our dreams, our deeds they stir,  
Strive on our lips for language, shame and spur  
The sluggard in us, out of darkness come

Like summoned champions when the world is  
dumb.

## 18 THUNDER ON THE DOWNS

Within our hearts they wait with all they gave.  
Woe to us, woe, if we become their grave !  
It shall not be. Darken thy pall, and trail,  
Thunder of heaven, above the valleys pale !  
Another England in my vision glows.  
And she is armed within ; at last she knows  
Herself, and what to her own soul belongs.  
Mid the world's irremediable wrongs  
She keeps her faith ; and nothing of her name  
Or of her handiwork but doth proclaim  
Her purpose. Her own soul hath made her  
free,  
Not circumstance ; she knows no victory  
Save of the mind : in her is nothing done,  
No wrong, no shame, no glory of any one,  
But is the cause of all and each, a thing  
Felt like a fire to kindle and to sting  
The proud blood of a nation. On her brows  
Is hope ; her body doth her spirit house  
Express and eloquent, not numb and frore ;  
And her voice echoes over sea and shore,  
And all the lands and isles that are her own  
In choric interchange and antiphon  
Answer, as fancy hears in yonder cloud  
From vale to vale repeated low and loud  
The still suspended thunder.

Hearts of Youth,

High-beating, ardent, quick in hope and ruth  
And noble anger, O wherever now  
You dedicate your uncorrupted vow  
To be an energy of Light, a sword  
Of the ever-living Will, amid abhorred  
Din of the reeking street and populous den  
Where under the great stars blind lusts of men  
War on each other, or escaped to hills  
Where peace the solitary evening fills,  
Or far remote on other soils of earth  
Keeping the dearness of your fathers' hearth  
On vast plains of the West, or Austral strands  
Of the warm underworld, or storied lands  
Of the orient sun, or over ocean ways  
Stemming the wave through blue or stormy  
days  
Wherever, as the circling light slopes round,  
On human lips is heard an English sound,  
O scattered, silent, hidden and unknown,  
Be lifted up, for you are not alone !  
High-beating hearts, to your deep vows be true !  
Live out your dreams, for England lives in you.

MIDSUMMER, 1911.





## THE WINNOWING FAN



## THE FOURTH OF AUGUST

Now in thy splendour go before us,  
Spirit of England, ardent-eyed,  
Enkindle this dear earth that bore us,  
In the hour of peril purified.

The cares we hugged drop out of vision,  
Our hearts with deeper thoughts dilate.  
We step from days of sour division  
Into the grandeur of our fate.

For us the glorious dead have striven,  
They battled that we might be free.  
We to their living cause are given ;  
We arm for men that are to be.

Among the nations nobliest chartered,  
England recalls her heritage.  
In her is that which is not bartered,  
Which force can neither quell nor cage.

For her immortal stars are burning ;  
With her the hope that's never done,  
The seed that's in the Spring's returning,  
The very flower that seeks the sun.

She fights the fraud that feeds desire on  
Lies, in a lust to enslave or kill,  
The barren creed of blood and iron,  
Vampire of Europe's wasted will . . .

Endure, O Earth ! and thou, awaken,  
Purged by this dreadful winnowing-fan,  
O wronged, untameable, unshaken  
Soul of divinely suffering man.

## STRANGE FRUIT

THIS year the grain is heavy-ripe ;  
The apple shows a ruddier stripe ;  
Never berries so profuse  
Blackened with so sweet a juice  
On brambly hedges, summer-dyed.  
The yellow leaves begin to glide ;  
But Earth in careless lap-ful treasures  
Pledge of over-brimming measures,  
As if some rich unwonted zest  
Stirred prodigal within her breast.  
And now, while plenty's left uncared,  
The fruit unplucked, the sickle spared,  
Where men go forth to waste and spill,  
Toiling to burn, destroy, and kill,  
Lo, also side by side with these  
Beast-hungers, ravening miseries,  
The heart of man has brought to birth  
Splendours richer than his earth.  
Now in the thunder-hour of fate  
Each one is kinder to his mate ;  
The surly smile ; the hard forbear ;  
There's help and hope for all to share ;

## STRANGE FRUIT

And sudden visions of goodwill  
Transcending all the scope of ill  
Like a glory of rare weather  
Link us in common light together,  
A clearness of the cleansing sun,  
Where none's alone and all are one ;  
And touching each a priceless pain  
We find our own true hearts again.  
No more the easy masks deceive :  
We give, we dare, and we believe.

## THE NEW IDOL

MAGNIFICENT the Beast ! Look in the eyes  
Of the fell tiger towering on his prey,  
Beautiful in his power to pounce and slay  
And effortless in action. He denies  
All but himself. He gloats on his weak prize,  
Roaring the anger of wild breath at bay,  
Blank anger like an element whose way  
Is mere annihilation ! Terrible eyes !

But there is one more to be feared, who can  
Escape the prison of his own wrath ; whose will  
Lives beyond life ; who smiles with quiet lips ;  
Most terrible because most tender, Man,—  
Not only uncowed but irresistible  
When the cause fires him to the finger-tips.

## THE HARVEST

RED reapers under these sad August skies,  
Proud War-Lords, careless of ten thousand dead,  
Who leave earth's kindly crops unharvested  
As you have left the kindness of the wise  
For brutal menace and for clumsy lies,  
The spawn of insolence by bragging fed,  
With power and fraud in faith's and honour's  
stead,  
Accounting these but good stupidities ;

You reap a heavier harvest than you know.  
Disnaturing a nation, you have thieved  
Her name, her patient genius, while you thought  
To fool the world and master it. You sought  
Reality. It comes in hate and woe.  
In the end you also shall not be deceived.



## TO THE BELGIANS

O RACE that Cæsar knew,  
That won stern Roman praise,  
What land not envies you  
The laurel of these days ?

You built your cities rich  
Around each towered hall,—  
Without, the statued niche,  
Within, the pictured wall.

Your ship-thronged wharves, your marts  
With gorgeous Venice vied.  
Peace and her famous arts  
Were yours : though tide on tide

Of Europe's battle scourged  
Black field and reddened soil,  
From blood and smoke emerged  
Peace and her fruitful toil.

## TO THE BELGIANS

Yet when the challenge rang,  
"The War-Lord comes ; give room !"  
Fearless to arms you sprang  
Against the odds of doom.

Like your own Damian  
Who sought that lepers' isle  
To die a simple man  
For men with tranquil smile,

So strong in faith you dared  
Defy the giant, scorn  
Ignobly to be spared,  
Though trampled, spoiled, and torn,

And in your faith arose  
And smote, and smote again,  
Till those astonished foes  
Reeled from their mounds of slain ;

The faith that the free soul,  
Untaught by force to quail,  
Through fire and dirge and dole  
Prevails and shall prevail.

## TO THE BELGIANS

31

Still for your frontier stands  
The host that knew no dread,  
Your little, stubborn land's  
Nameless, immortal dead.

## LOUVAIN

*To Dom Bruno Destrée, O.S.B.*

## I

It was the very heart of Peace that thrilled  
In the deep minster-bell's wide-throbbing sound  
When over old roofs evening seemed to build  
Security this world has never found.

Your cloister looked from Cæsar's rampart, high  
O'er the fair city : clustered orchard-trees  
Married their murmur with the dreaming sky.  
It was the house of lore and living peace.

And there we talked of youth's delightful years  
In Italy, in England. Now, O Friend,  
I know not if I speak to living ears  
Or if upon you too is come the end.

Peace is on Louvain ; dead peace of spilt blood  
Upon the mounded ashes where she stood.

## II

But from that blood, those ashes, there arose  
Not hoped-for terror cowering as it ran,  
But divine anger flaming upon those  
Defamers of the very name of man,

Abortions of their blind hyena-creed,  
Who for " protection " of their battle-host  
Against the unarmed of them they had made to  
    bleed,  
Whose hearts they had tortured to the utter-  
    most

Without a cause, past pardon, fired and tore  
The towers of fame and beauty, while they shot  
And butchered the defenceless in the door.  
But History shall hang them high, to rot

Unburied, in the face of times unborn,  
Mankind's abomination and last scorn.

## TO GOETHE

GOETHE, who saw and who foretold  
A world revealed  
New-springing from its ashes old  
On Valmy field,

When Prussia's sullen hosts retired  
Before the advance  
Of ragged, starved, but freedom-fired  
Soldiers of France ;

If still those clear, Olympian eyes  
Through smoke and rage  
Your ancient Europe scrutinize,  
What think you, Sage ?

Are these the armies of the Light  
That seek to drown  
The light of lands where freedom's fight  
Has won renown ?

Will they blot also out your name  
Because you praise  
All works of men that shrine the flame  
Of beauty's ways,

Wherever men have proved them great,  
Nor, drunk with pride,  
Saw but a single swollen State  
And naught beside,

Nor dreamed of drilling Europe's mind  
With threat and blow  
The way professors have designed  
Genius should go ?

Or shall a people rise at length  
And see, and shake  
The fetters from its giant strength,  
And grandly break

This pedantry of feud and force  
To man untrue  
Thundering and blundering on its course  
To death and rue ?

## AT RHEIMS

THEIR hearts were burning in their breasts  
 Too hot for curse or cries.  
 They stared upon the towers that burned  
 Before their smarting eyes.

There where, since France began to be,  
 Anointed kings knelt down,  
 There where the Maid, the unafraid,  
 Received her vision's crown,

The senseless shell with nightmare scream  
 Burst, and fair fragments fell  
 Torn from their centuries of peace  
 As by the rage of hell.

What help for wrath, what use for wail ?  
 Before a dumb despair  
 All ancient, high, heroic France  
 Seemed burning, bleeding there.

. . . . .



Within, the pillars soar to gloom  
Lit by the glimmering Rose ;  
Spirits of beauty shrined in stone  
Afar from mortal woes,

Hearing not, though their haunted shade  
Is stricken, and all around  
With splintering flash and brutal crash  
The ghostly aisles resound.

And there, upon the pavement stretched,  
The German wounded groan  
To see the dropping flames of death  
And feel the shells their own.

Too fierce the fire ! Helped by their foes  
They stagger out to air.  
The green-gray coats are seen, are known  
Through all the crowded square.

. . . . .

Ah, now for vengeance ! Deep the groan :  
A death-knell ! Quietly  
Soldiers unsling their rifles, lift  
And aim with steady eye.

But sudden in the hush between  
Death and the doomed, there stands  
Against those levelled guns a priest,  
Gentle, with outstretched hands.

*Be not as guilty as they !* he cries . . .  
Each lets his weapon fall,  
As if a vision showed him France  
And vengeance vain and small.

## TO THE ENEMY COMPLAINING

BE ruthless, then ; scorn slaves of scruple ; avow  
The blow, planned with such patience, that you  
deal

So terribly ; hack on, and care not how  
The innocent fall ; live out your faith of steel.

Then you speak speech that we can comprehend.  
It cries from the unpitied blood you spill.  
And so we stand against you, and to the end  
Flame as one man, the weapon of one will.

But when your lips usurp the loyal phrase  
Of honour, querulously voluble  
Of " chivalry " and " kindness," and you praise  
What you despise for weakness of the fool,

Then the gorge rises. Bleat to dupe the dead !  
The wolf beneath the sheepskin drips too red.

## TO WOMEN

YOUR hearts are lifted up, your hearts  
That have foreknown the utter price.  
Your hearts burn upward like a flame  
Of splendour and of sacrifice.

For you, you too, to battle go,  
Not with the marching drums and cheers  
But in the watch of solitude  
And through the boundless night of fears.

Swift, swifter than those hawks of war,  
Those threatening wings that pulse the air,  
Far as the vanward ranks are set,  
You are gone before them, you are there !

And not a shot comes blind with death  
And not a stab of steel is pressed  
Home, but invisibly it tore  
And entered first a woman's breast.

Amid the thunder of the guns,  
The lightnings of the lance and sword,  
Your hope, your dread, your throbbing pride,  
Your infinite passion is outpoured

From hearts that are as one high heart  
Withholding naught from doom and bale,  
Burningly offered up,—to bleed,  
To bear, to break, but not to fail !

## FOR THE FALLEN

WITH proud thanksgiving, a mother for her  
children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her  
spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and  
royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were  
young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and  
aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds  
uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow  
old :

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades  
again ;

They sit no more at familiar tables of home ;

They have no lot in our labour of the day-time ;

They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,  
Found,

Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they  
are known

As the stars are known to the Night ;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are  
dust,

Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,

As the stars that are starry in the time of our  
darkness,

To the end, to the end, they remain.

## ODE FOR SEPTEMBER

## I

ON that long day when England held her breath,  
Suddenly gripped at heart  
And called to choose her part  
Between her loyal soul and luring sophistries,  
We watched the wide, green-bosomed land  
    beneath  
Driven and tumultuous skies ;  
We watched the volley of white shower after  
    shower  
Desolate with fierce drops the fallen flower ;  
And still the rain's retreat  
Drew glory on its track,  
And still, when all was darkness and defeat,  
Upon dissolving cloud the bow of peace shone  
    back.  
So in our hearts was alternating beat,  
With very dread elate ;  
And Earth dyed all her day in colours of our  
    fate.



## II

But oh, how faint the image we foretold  
In fancies of our fear  
Now that the truth is here !  
And we awake from dream yet think it still a  
dream.  
It bursts our thoughts with more than thought  
can hold ;  
And more than human seem  
These agonies of conflict ; Elements  
At war ! yet not with vast indifference  
Casually crushing ; nay,  
It is as if were hurled  
Lightnings that murdered, seeking out their  
prey ;  
As if an earthquake shook to chaos half the  
world,  
Equal in purpose as in power to slay ;  
And thunder stunned our ears  
Streaming in rain of blood on torrents that are  
tears.

## III

Around a planet rolls the drum's alarm.  
Far where the summer smiles  
Upon the utmost isles,  
Danger is treading silent as a fever-breath.  
Now in the North the secret waters arm ;  
Under the wave is Death :  
They fight in the very air, the virgin air,  
Hovering on fierce wings to the onset : there  
Nations to battle stream ;  
Earth smokes and cities burn ;  
Heaven thickens in a storm of shells that scream ;  
The long lines shattering break, turn and again  
return ;  
And still across a continent they teem,  
Moving in myriads ; more  
Than ranks of flesh and blood, but soul with  
soul at war !

## IV

All the hells are awake : the old serpents hiss  
From dungeons of the mind ;  
Fury of hate born blind,  
Madness and lust, despairs and treacheries un-  
clean ;  
They shudder up from man's most dark abyss.  
But there are heavens serene  
That answer strength with strength ; they  
stand secure ;  
They arm us from within, and we endure.  
Now are the brave more brave,  
Now is the cause more dear,  
The more the tempests of the darkness rave,  
As, when the sun goes down, the shining stars  
are clear.  
Radiant the spirit rushes to the grave.  
Glorious it is to live  
In such an hour, but life is lovelier yet to give.

## V

Alas ! what comfort for the uncomforted,  
Who knew no cause, nor sought  
Glory or gain ? they are taught,  
Homeless in homes that burn, what human  
    hearts can bear.

The children stumble over their dear dead,  
Wandering they know not where.

And there is one who simply fights, obeys,  
Tramps, till he loses count of nights and days,  
Tired, mired in dust and sweat,  
Far from his own hearth-stone ;  
A common man of common earth, and yet  
The battle-winner he, a man of no renown,  
Where " food for cannon " pays a nation's  
    debt.

This is Earth's hero, whom  
The pride of Empire tosses careless to his  
    doom

## VI

Now will we speak, while we have eyes for tears  
And fibres to be wrung  
And in our mouths a tongue.  
We will bear wrongs untold but will not only  
bear ;  
Not only bear, but build through striving years  
The answer of our prayer,  
That whatsoever has the noble name  
Of man, shall not be yoked to alien shame ;  
That life shall be indeed  
Life, not permitted breath  
Of spirits wrenched and forced to others' need,  
Robbed of their nature's joy and free alone in  
death.  
The world shall travail in that cause, shall bleed,  
But deep in hope it dwells  
Until the morning break which the long night  
foretells.

## VII

O children filled with your own airy glee  
Or with a grief that comes  
So swift, so strange, it numbs,  
If on your growing youth this page of terror bite,  
Harden not then your senses, feel and be  
The promise of the light.  
O heirs of Man, keep in your hearts not less  
The divine torrents of his tenderness !  
'Tis ever war : but rust  
Grows on the sword ; the tale  
Of earth is strewn with empires heaped in dust  
Because they dreamed that force should punish  
and prevail.  
The will to kindness lives beyond their lust ;  
Their grandeurs are undone :  
Deep, deep within man's soul are all his vic-  
tories won.

## THE ANVIL





## THE ANVIL

BURNED from the ore's rejected dross  
The iron whitens in the heat.  
With plangent strokes of pain and loss  
The hammers on the iron beat.  
Searched by the fire, through death and dole  
We feel the iron in our soul.

O dreadful Forge ! if torn and bruised  
The heart, more urgent comes our cry  
Not to be spared but to be used,  
Brain, sinew, and spirit, before we die.  
Beat out the iron, edge it keen,  
And shape us to the end we mean !

## THE HEALERS

IN a vision of the night I saw them,  
In the battles of the night.  
'Mid the roar and the reeling shadows of blood  
They were moving like light,

Light of the reason, guarded  
Tense within the will,  
As a lantern under a tossing of boughs  
Burns steady and still.

With scrutiny calm, and with fingers  
Patient as swift  
They bind up the hurts and the pain-writhen  
Bodies uplift,

Untired and defenceless ; around them  
With shrieks in its breath  
Bursts stark from the terrible horizon  
Impersonal death ;

But they take not their courage from anger  
That blinds the hot being ;  
They take not their pity from weakness ;  
Tender, yet seeing ;

Feeling, yet nerved to the uttermost ;  
Keen, like steel ;  
Yet the wounds of the mind they are stricken  
with,  
Who shall heal ?

They endure to have eyes of the watcher  
In hell, and not swerve  
For an hour from the faith that they follow,  
The light that they serve.

Man true to man, to his kindness  
That overflows all,  
To his spirit erect in the thunder  
When all his forts fall,—

This light, in the tiger-mad welter  
They serve and they save.  
What song shall be worthy to sing of them—  
Braver than the brave ?

## THE ZEPPELIN

GUNS ! far and near,  
Quick, sudden, angry,  
They startle the still street.  
Upturned faces appear,  
Doors open on darkness,  
There is a hurrying of feet,

And whirled athwart gloom  
White fingers of alarm  
Point at last there  
Where illumined and dumb  
A shape suspended  
Hovers, a demon of the starry air !

Strange and cold as a dream  
Of sinister fancy,  
It charms like a snake,  
Poised deadly in a gleam,  
While bright explosions  
Leap up to it and break,

Is it terror you seek  
To exult in ? Know then  
Hearts are here  
That the plunging beak  
Of night-winged murder  
Strikes not with fear

So much as it strings  
To a deep elation  
And a quivering pride  
That at last the hour brings  
For them too the danger  
Of those who died,

Of those who yet fight  
Spending for each of us  
Their glorious blood  
In the foreign night,—  
That now we are neared to them  
Thank we God.

## ORPHANS OF FLANDERS

WHERE is the land that fathered, nourished,  
poured

The sap of a strong race into your veins,  
Land of wide tilth, of farms and granaries stored,  
Of old towers chiming over peaceful plains ?

It is become a vision, barred away  
Like light in cloud, a memory and belief.  
On those lost plains the Glory of yesterday  
Builds her dark towers for the bells of Grief.

It is become a splendour-circled name  
For all the world ; a torch against the skies  
Burns on that blood-spot, the unpardoned shame  
Of them that conquered : but your homeless  
eyes

See rather some brown pond by a white wall,  
Red cattle crowding in the ruddy lane,  
A garden, where the hollyhocks were tall  
In the Augusts that shall never be again.

There your thoughts cling as the long-thrusting  
root

Clings in the ground ; your orphaned hearts are  
there.

O mates of sunburnt earth, your love is mute  
But strong like thirst and deeper than despair.

You have endured what pity can but grope  
To feel : into that darkness enters none.  
We have but hands to help ; yours is the hope  
Whose courage rises silent with the sun.

## THE ENGLISH GRAVES

THE rains of yesterday are flown,  
And light is on the farthest hills ;  
The homeliest rough grass by the stone  
To radiance thrills ;

And the wet bank above the ditch,  
Trailing its thorny bramble, shows  
Soft apparitions, clustered rich,  
Of the pure primrose.

The shining stillness breathes, vibrates  
From simple earth to lonely sky,  
A hinted wonder that awaits  
The heart's reply.

O lovely life ! the chaffinch sings  
High on the hazel, near and clear.  
Sharp to the heart's blood, sweetness springs  
In the morning here.



But my heart goes with the young cloud  
That voyages the April light  
Southward, across the beaches loud  
And cliffs of white

To fields of France, far fields that spread  
Beyond the tumbling of the waves,  
And touches as with shadowy tread  
The English graves.

There too is Earth that never weeps,  
The unrepining Earth, that holds  
The secret of a thousand sleeps  
And there unfolds

Flowers of sweet ignorance on the slope  
Where strong arms dropped and blood choked  
    breath,  
Earth that forgets all things but hope  
And smiles on death.

They poured their spirits out in pride,  
They throbbed away the price of years:  
Now that dear ground is glorified  
With dreams, with tears.

A flower there is sown, to bud  
And bloom beyond our loss and smart :  
Noble France, at its root is blood  
From England's heart.

## FETCHING THE WOUNDED

At the road's end glimmer the station lights ;  
How small beneath the immense hollow of  
Night's

Lonely and living silence ! Air that raced  
And tingled on the eyelids as we faced  
The long road stretched between the poplars  
flying

To the dark behind us, shuddering and sighing  
With phantom foliage, lapses into hush.  
Magical supersession ! The loud rush  
Swims into quiet ; midnight reassumes  
Its solitude ; there's nothing but great glooms,  
Blurred stars ; whispering gusts ; the hum of  
wires.

And swerving leftwards upon noiseless tires  
We glide over the grass that smells of dew.  
A wave of wonder bathes my body through !  
For there in the headlamps' gloom-surrounded  
beam

Tall flowers spring before us, like a dream,  
Each luminous little green leaf intimate

And motionless, distinct and delicate  
With powdery white bloom fresh upon the stem,  
As if that clear beam had created them  
Out of the darkness. Never so intense  
I felt the pang of beauty's innocence,  
Earthly and yet unearthly.

A sudden call !

We leap to ground, and I forget it all.  
Each hurries on his errand ; lanterns swing ;  
Dark shapes cross and re-cross the rails ; we  
    bring  
Stretchers, and pile and number them ; and  
    heap  
The blankets ready. Then we wait and keep  
A listening ear. Nothing comes yet ; all's still.  
Only soft gusts upon the wires blow shrill  
Fitfully, with a gentle spot of rain.  
Then, ere one knows it, the long gradual train  
Creeps quietly in and slowly stops. No sound  
But a few voices' interchange. Around  
Is the immense night-stillness, the expanse  
Of faint stars over all the wounds of France.

Now stale odour of blood mingles with keen  
Pure smell of grass and dew. Now lantern sheen  
Falls on brown faces opening patient eyes

And lips of gentle answers, where each lies  
 Supine upon his stretcher, black of beard  
 Or with young cheeks ; on cap and tunic  
 smeared

And stained, white bandages round foot or head  
 Or arm, discoloured here and there with red.  
 Sons of all corners of wide France ; from Lille,  
 Douay, the land beneath the invader's heel,  
 Champagne, Touraine, the fisher-villages  
 Of Brittany, the valleyed Pyrenees,  
 Blue coasts of the South, old Paris streets.

Argonne

Of ever smouldering battle, that anon  
 Leaps furious, brothered them in arms. They  
 fell

In the trenched forest scarred with reeking shell.  
 Now strange the sound comes round them in the  
 night

Of English voices. By the wavering light  
 Quickly we have borne them, one by one, to the  
 air,

And sweating in the dark lift up with care,  
 Tense-sinewed, each to his place. The cars at  
 last

Complete their burden : slowly, and then fast  
 We glide away.

And the dim round of sky,  
Infinite and silent, broods unseeingly  
Over the shadowy uplands rolling black  
Into far woods, and the long road we track  
Bordered with apparitions, as we pass,  
Of trembling poplars and lamp-whitened grass,  
A brief procession flitting like a thought  
Through a brain drowsing into slumber ; nought  
But we awake in the solitude immense !  
But hurting the vague dumbness of my sense  
Are fancies wandering the night : there steals  
Into my heart, like something that one feels  
In darkness, the still presence of far homes  
Lost in deep country, and in little rooms  
The vacant bed. I touch the world of pain  
That is so silent. Then I see again  
Only those infinitely patient faces  
In the lantern beam, beneath the night's vast  
spaces,  
Amid the shadows and the scented dew ;  
And those illumined flowers, springing anew  
In freshness like a smile of secrecy  
From the gloom-buried earth, return to me.  
The village sleeps ; blank walls, and windows  
barred.  
But lights are moving in the hushed courtyard

## FETCHING THE WOUNDED 67

As we glide up to the open door. The Chief  
Gives every man his order, prompt and brief.  
We carry up our wounded, one by one.  
The first cock crows : the morrow is begun.

## THE EBB OF WAR

IN the seven-times taken and retaken town  
Peace ! The mind stops ; sense argues against  
sense.

The August sun is ghostly in the street  
As if the Silence of a thousand years  
Were its familiar. All is as it was  
At the instant of the shattering : flat-thrown  
walls ;

Dislocated rafters ; lintels blown awry  
And toppling over ; what were windows, mere  
Gapings on mounds of dust and shapelessness ;  
Charred posts caught in a bramble of twisted  
iron ;

Wires sagging tangled across the street ; the black  
Skeleton of a vine, wrenched from the old house  
It clung to ; a limp bell-pull ; here and there  
Little printed papers pasted on the wall.  
It is like a madness crumpled up in stone,  
Laughterless, tearless, meaningless ; a frenzy  
Stilled, like at ebb the shingle in sea-caves  
Where the imagined weight of water swung



Its senseless crash with pebbles in myriads  
churned

By the random seethe. But here was flesh and  
blood,

Seeing eyes, feeling nerves ; memoried minds  
With the habit of the picture of these fields  
And the white roads crossing the wide green  
plain.

All vanished ! One could fancy the very fields  
Were memory's projection, phantoms ! All  
Silent ! The stone is hot to the touching hand.  
Footsteps come strange to the sense. In the  
sloped churchyard,

Where the tower shows the blue through its  
great rents,

Shadow falls over pitiful wrecked graves,  
And on the gravel a bare-headed boy,  
Hands in his pockets, with brown absent eyes,  
Whistles the Marseillaise : To Arms, To Arms !  
There is no other sound in the bright air.

It is as if they heard under the grass,  
The dead men of the Marne, and their thin voice  
Used those young lips to sing it from their graves,  
The song that sang a nation into arms.

And far away to the listening ear in the silence  
Like remote thunder throb the guns of France.

## THE ANTAGONISTS

## I

CAVERNS mouthed with blackness more than  
night,

Bog and jungle deep in strangling brier,  
Venom-breeding slime that loathest light,  
Who has plumbed your secret? who the blind  
desire

Hissing from the viper's lifted jaws,  
Maddening the beast with scent of prey  
Tracked through savage glooms on robber paws  
Till the slaughter gluts him red and reeking?

Nay,

Man, this breathing mystery, this intense  
Body beautiful with thinking eyes,  
Master of the spirit outsoaring sense,  
Spirit of tears and laughter, who has measured  
all the skies,—

Is he also the lair  
Of a lust, of a sting  
That hides from the air

Yet is lurking to spring  
From the nescient core  
Of his fibre, alert  
At the trumpet of war  
And hungry to hurt,  
When he hears from abysses of time  
Aboriginal mutters, replying  
To something he knew not within him,  
And the Demon of Earth crying :

“ I am the will of the fire  
That bursts into boundless fury ;  
I am my own implacable desire.

I am the will of the sea  
That shoulders the ships and breaks them ;  
There is none other but me.”

Heavy forests bred them,  
The race that dreamed.  
In the bones of savage earth  
Their dreams had birth :  
Darkness fed them.  
And the full brain grossly teemed  
With thoughts compressed, with rages  
Obstinate, stark, obscure—

Thirsts no time assuages,  
But centuries immure.  
As the sap of trees, behind  
Crumpled bark of bossy boles,  
Presses up its juices blind,  
Buried within their souls  
The dream insatiate still  
Nursed its fierceness old  
And violent will,  
Haunted with twilight where the Gods drink full  
Ere they renew their revelry of slaying,  
And warriors leap like the lion on the bull,  
And harsh horns in the northern mist are braying.

Tenebrous in them lay the dream  
Like a fire that under ashes  
Smoulders heavy-heaped and dim  
Yet with spurted stealthy flashes  
Sends a goblin shadow floating  
Crooked on the rafters—then  
Sudden from its den  
Springs in splendour. So should burst  
Destiny from dream, from thirst  
Rapture gloating  
On a vision of earth afar  
Stretched for a prize and a prey ;

And the secular might of the Gods re-risen  
Savage and glorious, waiting its day,  
Should shatter its ancient prison  
And leap like the panther to slay,  
Magnificent ! Storm, then, and thunder  
The haughty to crush with the tame,  
For the world is the strong man's plunder  
Whose coming is swifter than flame ;  
And the nations unready, decayed,  
Unworthy of fate or afraid,  
Shall be stricken and torn asunder  
Or yield in shame.

The Dream is fulfilled.  
Is it this that you willed,  
O patient ones ?  
For this that you gave  
Young to the grave  
Your valiant sons ?  
For this that you wore  
Brave faces, and bore  
The burden heart-breaking—  
Sublimely deceived,  
You that bled and believed—  
For the Dream ? or the Waking ?

## II

No drum-beat, pulsing challenge and desire,  
Sounded, no jubilant boast nor fierce alarm  
Cried throbbing from enfevered throats afire  
For glory, when from vineyard, forge, and farm,  
From wharf and warehouse, foundry, shop, and  
school,

From the unreaped cornfield and the office-stool  
France called her sons ; but loth, but grave,  
But silent, with their purpose proud and hard  
Within them, as of men that go to guard  
More than life, yet to dare  
More than death : France, it was their France  
to save !

Nor now the fiery legend of old fames  
And that imperial Eagle whose wide wings  
Hovered from Vistula to Finistère,  
Who plucked the crown from Kings,  
Filled her ; but France was arming in her mind :  
The world unborn and helpless, not the past  
Victorious with banners, called her on ;  
And she assembled not her sons alone

From city and hamlet, coast and heath and hill,  
But deep within her bosom, deeper still  
Than any fear could search, than any hope could  
blind,

Beyond all clamours of her recent day,  
Hot smouldering of the faction and the fray,  
She summoned her own soul. In the hour of  
night,

In the hush that felt the armed tread of her foes,  
Like a star, silent out of seas, it rose.

Most human France ! In those clear eyes of  
light

Was vision of the issue, and all the cost  
To the last drop of generous blood, the last  
Tears of the orphan and the widow ; and yet  
She shrank not from the terror of the debt,  
Seeing what else were with the cause undone,  
The very skies barred with an iron threat,  
The very mind of freedom lost  
Beneath that shadow bulked across the sun.  
Therefore did she abstain  
From all that had renowned her, all that won  
The world's delight : thought-stilled  
With deep reality to the heart she burned,  
And took upon her all the load of pain

Foreknown ; and her sons turned  
From wife's and children's kiss  
Simply, and steady-willed  
With quiet eyes, with courage keen and clear,  
Faced Eastward.—If an English voice she hear,  
That has no speech worthy of her, let this  
Be of that day remembered, with what pride  
Our ancient island thrilled to the oceans wide,  
And our hearts leapt to know that England then,  
Equal in faith of free and loyal men,  
Stept to her side.



## EDITH CAVELL

SHE was binding the wounds of her enemies  
when they came—

The lint in her hand unrolled.

They battered the door with their rifle-butts,  
crashed it in :

She faced them gentle and bold.

They haled her before the judges where they sat  
In their places, helmet on head.

With question and menace the judges assailed  
her, “ Yes,

I have broken your law,” she said.

“ I have tended the hurt and hidden the hunted,  
have done

As a sister does to a brother,

Because of a law that is greater than that you  
have made,

Because I could do none other.

“ Deal as you will with me. This is my choice to  
the end,

To live in the life I vowed.”

“ She is self-confessed,” they cried, “ she is self-  
condemned.

She shall die that the rest may be cowed.”

In the terrible hour of the dawn, when the veins  
are cold,

They led her forth to the wall.

“ I have loved my land,” she said, “ but it is  
not enough :

Love requires of me all.

“ I will empty my heart of the bitterness, hating  
none.”

And sweetness filled her brave

With a vision of understanding beyond the hour

That knelled to the waiting grave.

They bound her eyes, but she stood as if she  
shone.

The rifles it was that shook

When the hoarse command rang out. They  
could not endure

That last, that defenceless look.

And the officer strode and pistolled her surely,  
ashamed,  
That men, seasoned in blood,  
Should quail at a woman, only a woman,—  
dead  
As a flower stamped in the mud.

And now that the deed was securely done, in  
the night  
When none had known her fate,  
They answered those that had striven for her,  
day by day :  
“ It is over, you come too late.”

And with many words and sorrowful-phrased  
excuse  
Argued their German right  
To kill, most legally ; hard though the duty be,  
The law must assert its might.

Only a woman ! yet she had pity on them,  
The victim offered slain  
To the gods of fear that they worship. Leave  
them there,  
Red hands, to clutch their gain !

She bewailed not herself, and we will bewail her  
not

But with tears of pride rejoice  
That an English soul was found so crystal-clear  
To be triumphant voice

Of the human heart that dares adventure all  
But live to itself untrue,  
And beyond all laws sees love as the light in the  
night,  
As the star it must answer to.

The hurts she healed, the thousands comforted  
—these  
Make a fragrance of her fame.  
But because she stept to her star right on  
through death  
It is Victory speaks her name.

## MID-ATLANTIC

IF this were all !—A dream of dread  
Ran through me ; I watched the waves that fled  
Pale-crested out of hollows black,  
The hungry lift of helpless waves,  
A million million tossing graves,  
A wilderness without a track  
Beneath the barren moon :

If this were all !

The stars of night remotely strewn  
Looked on that restless heave and fall.  
I seemed with them to watch this old  
Bright planet through the ages rolled,  
Self-tortured, burning splendours vain  
And fevered with its greeds insane  
And with the blood of peoples red ;  
I watched it, grown an ember cold,  
Join in the dancing of the dead.

The chilly half-moon sank ; the sound  
Of naked surges roared around,

And through my heart the darkness poured  
Surges as of a sea unshored.  
O somewhere far and lost from light  
Blind Europe battled in the night !  
Then sudden through the darkness came  
The vision of a child,  
A child with feet as light as flame  
Who ran across the bitter waves,  
Across the tumbling of the graves—  
With arms stretched out he smiled.  
I drank the wine of life again,  
I breathed among my brother men,  
I felt the human fire.  
I knew that I must serve the will  
Of beauty and love and wisdom still ;  
Though all my hopes were overthrown,  
Though universes turned to stone,  
I have my being in this alone  
And die in that desire.

ON BOARD THE "LUSITANIA,"

DECEMBER, 1914.

## THE CAUSE

Out of these throes that search and sear  
What is it so deep arises in us  
Above the shaken thoughts of fear,—  
Whatever thread the Fates may spin us,—  
Above the horror that would drown  
And tempest that would strike us down ?

It is to stand in cleansing light,  
The cloud of dullard habit lifted,  
To use a certainty of sight  
And breathe an air by peril sifted,  
The things that once we deemed of price  
Consumed in smoke of sacrifice.

It is to feel the world we knew  
Changed to a wonder past our knowing ;  
The grass, the trees, the skiey blue,  
The very stones are inly glowing  
With something infinite behind  
These shadows, ardently divined.

We went our ways ; each bosom bore  
Its spark of separate desire ;  
But each now kindles to the core  
With faith from this transfusing fire,  
Whereto our inmost longings run  
To be made infinitely one

With that which nothing can destroy,  
Which lives when all is crushed and taken,  
The home of dearer than our joy,  
By all save by the soul forsaken  
Who strips her clean of doubt and care  
Because she breathes her native air,

Yet not in scorn of lovely earth  
And human sweetness born of living,  
For these are grown of dearer worth,  
A gift more precious in the giving,  
Since through this raiment's hues and lines  
The glory of the spirit shines.

Faces of radiant youth, that go  
Like rivers singing to the sea !  
You count no careful cost ; you know ;  
Of that far secret you are free ;  
And life in you its splendour spending  
Sings the stars' song that has no ending.



## BEFORE THE DAWN



## BEFORE THE DAWN

BLACKER the night grows ere the dawn be risen,  
Keener the cost, and fiercer yet the fight.  
But hark ! above the thunder and the terror  
A trumpet blowing splendid through the night.

It is the challenge of our dead undying  
Calling, *Remember ! we have died for you.*  
It is the cry of perilled earth's hereafter—  
Sons of our sons—*Be glorious, be true !*

Now in the hour when either world is witness,  
Never or now shall we be proven great,  
Rise to the height of all our strain and story,  
Ay, and beyond ; for we ourselves are Fate.

## GALLIPOLI

ISLES of the Aegean, Troy, and waters of Helles-  
pont !

You we have known from of old,  
Since boyhood stammering glorious Greek was  
entranced

In the tale that Homer told.  
There scornful Achilles towered and flamed  
through the battle,  
Defying the gods ; and there  
Hector armed, and Andromache proudly held  
up his boy to him,  
Knowing not yet despair.

We beheld them as presences moving beautiful  
and swift

In the radiant morning of Time,  
Far from reality, far from dulness of daily doing  
And from cities of fog and grime ;—  
Unattainable day-dream, heroes, gods and  
goddesses  
Matched in splendour of war,

Days of a vanished world, days of a grandeur  
perished,  
Days that should bloom no more.

But now shall our boyhood learn to tell a new  
tale,

And a new song shall be sung,  
And the sound of it shall praise not magnifi-  
cence of old time

But the glory and the greatness of the young.  
Deeds of this our own day, marvellous deeds of  
our own blood ;

Sons that their sires excel,  
Lightly going into peril and taking death by  
the hand ;—

Of these they shall sing, they shall tell.

How in ships sailing the famed Mediterranean  
From armed banks of Nile

Men from far homes in sunny Austral Dominions  
And the misty mother-isle,

Met in the great cause, joined in the vast adven-  
ture,

Saw first in April skies

Beyond storied islands, Gallipoli's promontory  
Impreguably ridged, arise.

And how from the belly of the black ship,  
driven beneath

Towering scarp and scaur  
Hailing hidden rages of fire in terrible gusts  
On the murdered space of shore,  
Into the water they leapt, they rushed and  
across the beach,  
With impetuous shout, all  
Inspired beyond men, climbed and were over  
the crest  
As a flame leaps over a wall.

Not all the gods in heaven's miraculous panoply  
Could have hindered or stayed them, so  
Irresistibly came they, scaled the unscaleable  
and sprang  
To stab the astonished foe,  
Marvellous doers of deeds, lifted past our ima-  
gining  
To a world where death is nought!  
As spirit against spirit, as a liberated element,  
As fire in flesh they fought.

Now to the old twilight and pale legendary  
glories,  
By our own youth outdone,

Those shores recede ; not there, but in memory  
everlasting

The immortal heights were won.

Of them that triumphed, of them that fell,  
there is only now

Silence, and sleep, and fame,

And in night's immensity far on that promon-  
tory's altar

An invisibly burning flame.

## THE DISTANT GUNS

NEGLIGENTLY the cart-track descends into the  
valley ;

The drench of the rain has passed and the clover  
breathes ;

Scents are abroad ; in the valley a mist whitens  
Along the hidden river, where the evening  
smiles.

The trees are asleep, their shadows are longer  
and longer,

Melting blue in the tender twilight ; above,  
In a pallor, barred with lilac and ashen cloud,  
Delicate as a spirit the young moon brightens ;  
And distant a bell intones the hour of peace,  
Where roofs of the village, gray and red, cluster  
In leafy dimness. Peace, old as the world !

The crickets shrilling in the high wet grass,  
And gnats, clouding upon the frail wild roses,  
Murmur of you ; but hark ! like a shudder upon  
the air,

Ominous and alien, knocking on the farther  
hills



As with airy hammers, the ghosts of terrible  
sound,—

Guns! From afar they are knocking on human  
hearts

Everywhere over the silent evening country,  
Knocking with fear and dark presentiment.

Only

The moon's beauty, where no life nor joy is,  
Brightening softly and knowing nothing, has  
peace.

ARC-EN-BARROIS, 1916.

## MEN OF VERDUN

THERE are five men in the moonlight  
That by their shadows stand :  
Three hobble humped on crutches,  
And two lack each a hand.

Frogs somewhere near the roadside  
Chorus a chant absorbed ;  
But a hush breathes out of the dream-light  
That far in heaven is orbéd.

It is gentle as sleep falling  
And wide as thought can span,  
The ancient peace and wonder  
That brims the heart of man.

Beyond the hills it shines now  
On no peace but the dead,  
On reek of trenches thunder-shocked,  
Tense fury of wills in wrestle locked,  
A chaos crumbled red !

The five men in the moonlight  
Chat, joke, or gaze apart.  
They talk of days and comrades ;  
But each one hides his heart.

They wear clean cap and tunic,  
As when they went to war ;  
A gleam comes where the medal's pinned :  
But they will fight no more.

The shadows, maimed and antic,  
Gesture and shape distort,  
Like mockery of a demon dumb  
Out of the hell-din whence they come  
That dogs them for his sport.

But as if dead men were risen  
And stood before me there  
With a terrible flame about them blown  
In beams of spectral air,

I see them, men transfigured  
As in a dream, dilate  
Fabulous with the Titan-throb  
Of battling Europe's fate ;

## MEN OF VERDUN

For history's hushed before them,  
And legend flames afresh.  
Verdun, the name of thunder,  
Is written on their flesh.

## LA PATRIE

THROUGH storm-blown gloom the subtle light  
persists ;

Shapes of tumultuous, ghostly cloud appear,  
Trailing a dark shower from hill-drenching  
mists :

Dawn, desolate in its majesty, is here.

But ere the wayside trees show leaf and form  
Invisible larks in all the air around

Ripple their songs up through the gloom and  
storm,

As if the baulked light had won wings of sound !

A wounded soldier on his stretcher waits

His turn for the ambulance, by the glimmering  
rails.

He is wrapped in a rough brown blanket, like  
his mates.

Over him the dawn broadens, the cloud pales.

Muscular, swart, bearded, and quite still,  
He lies, too tired to think, to wonder. Drops  
From a leaf fall by him. For spent nerve and  
will

The world of shattering and stunned effort stops.

He feels the air, song-thrilled and fresh and  
dim,

And close about him smells the rainy soil.  
It is ever-living Earth recovers him,  
Friend and companion of old, fruitful toil.

He is patient with her patience. Hurt, he takes  
Strength from her rooted, still tenacities.  
The will to heal, that secretly remakes,  
Like slumber, holds his dark, contented eyes.

For she, though—never reckoning of the cost—  
Full germs of all profusion she prepares,  
Knows tragic hours, too, parching famine, frost  
And wreck ; and in her children's hurt she  
shares.

Build what we may, house us in lofty mind's  
Palaces, wean the fine-wrought spirit apart,  
Earth touches where the fibre throbs, and winds  
The threads about us of her infinite heart.

And some dear ground with its own changing  
sky,  
As if it were our feeling flesh, is wrought  
Into the very body's dignity  
And private colour of least conscious thought.

O when that loud invader burned and bruised  
This ordered land's old kindness, with brute  
blows  
Shamed and befouled and plundered and abused,  
Was it not Earth that in her soldier rose

And armed him, terrible and simple? He  
Takes his wound, mute as Earth is, yet as  
strong.—

The funeral clouds trail, wet wind shakes the  
tree,  
But all the wild air of the dawn is song.

LATRECY, 1916.

## THE DEPORTATION

## I

IN vain, in vain, in vain !

Conqueror, you are conquered : though you  
grind

Those bodies, heel on neck ; and though you  
twist

Out of them the exquisite last wrench of pain,  
They rise, they rise again,

Rise quivering and eternally resist

All cunning that all cruelty can find

To mock the heart and lacerate the mind

In vain, in vain !

## II

The train stands packed for exile, truck on  
truck.

Men thronged like oxen, pressed against each  
other,

With worse than anger in their dangerous eyes,



Look on their drivers, armed and helmeted,—  
Then forget all in sudden stormy cries  
As past the bayonets sister, wife, and mother  
Strain up to them, clutch fingers tight, are  
struck

And beaten back, but struggle and press again,  
Catch desolated kisses, fight for breath  
To sob their widowed hearts out in a word  
Their man shall hear, reckless of wound or  
death

So they come nigh him ; a farewell insane,  
A passion as if the earth that bore them heard  
And in her bones groaned ! And white children  
held

On shoulders where the torn dress hangs in  
strips

Cry Father ! and mute answers wring the lips  
Of the exiles, in their torture still unquelled.

A whistle screams. The guards drive, shout,  
beat. Then

An inspiration like an ecstasy  
Seizes these women, and they rush to throw  
Their sobbing bodies prone upon the tracks  
Before the panting engine. If their men  
Into that night of slavery must go,

## THE DEPORTATION

They'll be with death before them ! Prostrate  
there,

Tear-blinded, with tense arms and heaving  
backs,

Young wife and child and mother of grey hair

Clutch the rails, anguished and athirst to die,

While over them the towering engine throbs,

Blind, ignorant, deaf, and ready. But you  
spare

Such easiness of end, you who did this

Which the sun looked on, and which History

Shall see for ever. Though they cling with sobs

To their own earth, frenzied and bleeding, swift

They are harried up ; the bayonets prise and  
lift

And tear away their hands' despairing grasp ;

They are tossed on either side : at the engine's  
hiss

The wheels begin that road which curses pave

Between those piteous heaps that cry and gasp

Helpless, and cheated even of their grave.

## III

But something lives and burns  
More perilous to assail  
Than flesh of bodies frail :  
It waits and it returns.  
And when in the night you dream  
Of the day that you did this thing,  
When you see those eyes and the bayonet's  
gleam  
And the shrieks to your very heart's blood ring  
As you do your deed in your dream again,  
The soul of the race that you racked, to do  
Your Lord's command, that you thought to  
have cowed,  
Shall sharpen the bitterness thrice for you  
As it rises before you, crying aloud :  
You did it in vain, in vain !

## THE BELLS OF YPRES

ON the road to Ypres, on the long road,  
Marching strong,  
We'll sing a song of Ypres, of her glory  
And her wrong.  
Proud rose her towers in the old time,  
Long ago.  
Trees stood on her ramparts, and the water  
Lay below.  
Shattered are the towers into potsherds—  
Jumbled stones.  
Underneath the ashes that were rafters  
Whiten bones.  
Blood is in the cellar where the wine was,  
On the floor.  
Rats run on the pavement where the wives met  
At the door.  
But in Ypres there's an army that is biding,  
Seen of none,  
You'd never hear their tramp, nor see their  
shadow  
In the sun.

Thousands of the dead men there are waiting  
Through the night,  
Waiting for a bugle in the cold dawn  
Blown for fight.  
Listen when the bugle's calling Forward !  
They'll be found,  
Dead men, risen in battalions  
From underground,  
Charging with us home, and through the foemen  
Driving fear  
Swifter than the madness in a madman,  
As they hear  
Dead men ring the bells of Ypres  
For a sign,  
Hear the bells and fear them in the Hun-land  
Over Rhine !

## ENGLAND'S POET

*Written for the Shakespeare Tercentenary*

To other voices, other majesties,  
Removed this while, Peace shall resort again.  
But he was with us in our darkest pain  
And stormiest hour : his faith royally dyes  
The colours of our cause ; his voice replies  
To all our doubt, dear spirit ! heart and vein  
Of England's old adventure ! his proud strain  
Rose from our earth to the sea-breathing skies.

Even over chaos and the murdering roar  
Comes that world-winning music, whose full  
stops  
Sounded all man, the bestial and divine ;  
Terrible as thunder, fresh as April drops.  
He stands, he speaks, the soul-transfigured sign  
Of all our story, on the English shore.

## GOING WEST

Just as I came  
Into the empty, westward-facing room,  
A sudden gust blew wide  
The tall window ; at once  
A shock of sudden light, vibrating like a flame,  
Entered, as if it were the wind's bright spirit  
Stealing to me upon some secret quest.  
The wonder of the West  
Burst open ; under dark and rushing cloud  
That rained illumined drops, it glorified  
Each corner where so dazzlingly it struck :  
The shadows cowered, the brilliance overflowed.  
As suddenly, all faded.  
Wet, wild air blew in  
At the idly-swinging door  
Stormily crumpled fallen shreds of leaves,  
Dried scarlet and burnt yellow and ashy brown :  
They fluttered in like fears and blew across the  
floor.  
And I, to the heart invaded,  
Felt as that wild light palpitated through me

And died in a moment down,  
Exalted by a visionary fear  
That from the light more than the shadow fell ;  
A divination of splendid spirits near,  
Of glorious parting and of great farewell.



## THE BEREAVED

WE grudged not those that were dearer than  
all we possessed,  
Lovers, brothers, sons.  
Our hearts were full, and out of a full heart  
We gave our belovèd ones.

Because we loved, we gave. In the hardest  
hour  
When at last—so much unsaid  
In the eyes—they went, simply, with tender  
smile,  
Our hearts to the end they read.

They to their deeds ! To things that their soul  
hated,  
And yet to splendours won  
From smoking hell by the spirit that moved in  
them ;  
But we to endure alone.

## THE BEREAVED

Their hearts rested on ours ; their homing  
thoughts

Met ours in the still of the night.

We ached with the ache of the long waiting, and  
throbbed

With the throbs of the surging fight.

O had we failed them, then were we desolate  
now

And separated indeed.

What should have comforted, what should have  
helped us then

In the time of our bitter need !

But now, though sorrow be ever fresh, sorrow  
Is tender as love ; it knows

That of love it was born, and Love with the  
shining eyes

The hard way chose.

And out of deeps eternal, night and day,

A strength our sorrow frees,

Flooding us, full as the tide up the rivers flows  
From the depth of the silent seas ;

A strength that is mightier far than we, yet a  
strength

Whereof our spirit is breath,  
Hope of the world, that is strange to hazard  
and fear,  
To the wounds of Time, and Death.

-

## THE SIBYLS

RENDING the waters of a night unknown  
The ship with tireless pulses bore me,  
On the shadowy deck musing late and lone,  
Over waste ocean.  
The rustling of the cordage in the dewy wind  
And the sound of idle surges  
Falling prolonged and for ever again up-thrown  
Drowsed me ; I slept, I dreamed.

Out of the seas that streamed  
In ghostly turbulence moving and glimmering  
about me  
I saw the rising of vast and visionary forms.

Like clouds, like continents of cloud, they rose  
August as the shape of storms  
In the silence before the thunder, or of moun-  
tains  
Alone in a sky of sunken light : they rose  
Slowly, with shrouded grandeur

Of queenly bosom and shoulder ; and afar  
Their countenances were lifted, although veiled,  
Although heavy as with thought and with  
    silence,  
In the heights where dimly gathered  
Star upon solitary star.

And it seemed to me, as I dreamed,  
That these were the forms of the Sibyls of old,  
Prophetesses whose eyes were aflame with in-  
    terior fire,  
Who passionately prophesied and none com-  
    prehended,  
In the womb of whose thought was quickened  
    the world's desire,  
Who saw, and because they saw, chastised  
With voices terribly chanting on the wind  
The folly of the faithlessness of men.

But not as they haunted then  
In cavernous and wild places,  
Each inaccessibly sequestered  
And sought with furtive steps  
Through wizard leaves of whispering laurel  
    feared,

Now to me they appeared.  
But rather like Queens of fabulous dominion  
Like Queens, voices of a voiceless people,  
Queens of old time, with aweing faces,  
With burdened brows but with proud eyes,  
Assembled in solemn parley, to shape  
Futurity and the nations' glory and doom,  
They were met in the night together.

And lo ! beneath them  
The immeasurable circle of the gloom  
Phantasmally disclosed  
In apparition all the coasts of the world,  
Veined with rivers afar to the frozen mountains  
And I saw the shadow of maniac Death  
Like a reveller there stagger gluttoned and  
gloating.

I saw murdered cities  
That raised like a stiffened arm  
One blackened tower to heaven ; I saw  
Processions of the homeless crawling into the  
distances ;  
And sullen leagues of interminable battle ;  
And peoples arming afar ; the very earth,  
The very bowels of the earth infected  
With the rages and the agonies of men.

For a moment the vision gleamed, and then  
was gone:

Gloom rushed down like rain.

But out of the midst of the darkness

My flesh was aware of a sound,

The peopled-sound of moving millions

And the voices of human pain.

I lifted my gaze to the Sibyls,

The Sibyls of the Continents, where they rose

Looking one on another.

Ancestral Asia, mother of musing mind,

Was there ; and over against her

Towered in the gates of the West a shape

Of youth gigantic, troubled and vigilant ;

Patient with eager dumbness in dark eyes,

Africa rose ; and ardent out of the South

The youngest of those great sisters ; and proud,

With fame upon her for mantle, and regal-  
browed,

The stature of Europe old.

It seemed they listened to the murmur

Of the anguished lands beneath them

In sombre reverberation rising and upward  
rolled.

Everywhere battle and arming for battle,  
Famine and torture, odour of burning and  
    blood,  
Doubt, hatred, terror,  
Rage and lamenting !  
I heard sweet Pity crying between the earth  
    and sky :  
But who had leisure for her call ? or who  
    hearkened to her cry ?

Not with our vision, and not with our horizon  
The gaze of the Sibyls was filled.  
Their trouble was trouble beyond the shaping  
    of our fear,  
Their hope full-sailed upon oceans beyond  
    our ken ;  
Their thoughts were the thoughts that build  
Towers for the dawn unseen.

But nearer than ever before  
They drew to each other, sister to shrouded  
    sister,  
Queen to superb Queen.  
What counsel took they together ? or what  
    word



Of power and of parturition  
Passed their lips ? What saw they,  
Conferring among the stars ?  
My blood tingled, and I heard  
Syllables, O too vast  
For capacity of my ears, yet within me,  
In the innermost bones and caves of my being  
I felt a voice like the voice of a sea,  
And the sound of it seemed to be crying :  
“ Endure !  
Humble yourselves, O dreamers of dreams,  
In whose bosom is peril fiercer than fire or beast,  
Humble yourselves, O desolaters of your own  
dreams,  
Then arise and remember !  
Though now you cry in astonishment and  
anguish  
‘ What have we done to the beauty of the world  
That it ruins about us in ashes and blood ? ’  
Remember the Spirit that moulded and made  
you  
In the beauty of the body  
Shaped as the splendour of speech to thought,  
The Spirit that wills with one desire,  
With infinite else unsatisfied desire,  
Peace, not made by conquerors and armies,

Peace born in the soul, that asks not shelter or  
a pillow,  
The peace of truth, unshaken amid the thunder,  
Unaffrighted by fury of shrivelling fire,  
And neither time nor tempest  
Neither slumber nor calamity,  
Neither rending of the flesh nor breaking of the  
heart,  
Shall stay you from that desire."

That sound floated like a cloud in heaven,  
Lingering ; and like an answer  
Came the sound of the rushing of spirits trium-  
phant,  
Of young men dying for a cause.

I lifted my eyes in wonder.  
And silence filled me.  
And with the silence I was aware  
Of a breath moving in the glimmer of the air.  
The stars had vanished ; but again  
I beheld those Sibyls august  
Over stilled ocean,  
And on their faces the dawn.  
Even as I looked, they lifted up their heads,

They lifted their heads, like eagles  
That slowly shake and widen their wondrous  
wings ;

They arose and vanished like the stars.

The light of the changed world, the world new-  
born,

Brimmed over the silence of the seas ;

But even in the rising of its beam

I remembered the light in their eyes.

## TO THE END

BECAUSE the time has stript us bare  
Of all things but the thing we are,  
Because our faith requires us whole  
And we are seen to the very soul,  
Rejoice ! from now all meaner fears are fled.

Because we have no prize to win  
Auguster than the truth within,  
And by consuming of the dross  
Magnificently lose our loss,  
Rejoice ! we have not vainly borne and bled.

Because we chose beyond recall  
And for dear honour hazard all,  
And summoned to the last attack  
Refuse to falter or look back,  
Rejoice ! we die, the Cause is never dead.

# THE NEW WORLD



## MORN LIKE A THOUSAND SHINING SPEARS

MORN like a thousand shining spears  
Terrible in the East appears.  
O hide me, leaves of lovely gloom,  
Where the young Dreams like lilies bloom !

What is this music that I lose  
Now, in a world of fading clues ?  
What wonders from beyond the seas  
And wild Arabian fragrancies ?

In vain I turn me back to where  
Stars made a palace of the air.  
In vain I hide my face away  
From the too bright invading Day.

That which is come requires of me  
My utter truth and mystery.  
Return, you dreams, return to Night :  
My lover is the arméd Light.

## THE NEW WORLD

*To the people of the United States*

Now is the time of the splendour of Youth and  
Death.

The spirit of man grows grander than men knew.  
The unbearable burden is borne, the impossible  
done ;

Though harder is yet to do

Before this agony end, and that be won

We seek through blinding battle, in choking  
breath,—

The New World, seen in vision ! Land of lands,  
In the midst of storms that desolate and divide,  
In the hour of the breaking heart, O far-  
descried,

You build our courage, you hold up our hands.

Men of America, you that march to-day

Through roaring London, supple and lean of  
limb,

Glimpsed in the crowd I saw you, and in your eye  
Something alert and grim,



As knowing on what stern call you march away  
To the wrestle of nations ; saw your heads held  
high

And, that same moment, far in a glittering  
beam

High over old and storied Westminster  
The Stars and Stripes with England's flag astir,  
Sisterly twined and proud on the air astream.

Men of America, what do you see ? Is it old  
Towers of fame and grandeur time-resigned ?  
The frost of custom's backward-gazing thought ?  
Seek closer ! You shall find

Miracles hour by hour in silence wrought ;  
Births, and awakenings ; dyings never tolled ;  
Invisible crumble and fall of prison-bars.

O, wheresoever his home, new or decayed,  
Man is older than all the things he has made  
And yet the youngest spirit beneath the stars.

Rock-cradled, white, and soaring out of the  
sea,

I behold again the fabulous city arise,  
Manhattan ! Queen of thronged and restless  
bays

And of daring ships is she.

O lands beyond, that into the sunset gaze,  
Limitless, teeming continent of surmise !  
I drink again that diamond air, I thrill  
To the lure of a wonder more than the wondrous  
past,  
And see before me ages yet more vast  
Rising, to challenge heart and mind and will.

What sailed they out to seek, who of old came  
To that bare earth and wild, unhistoried coast ?  
Not gold, nor granaries, nay, nor a halcyon ease  
For the weary and tempest-tost :  
The unshaken soul they sought, possessed in  
peace.

What seek we now, and hazard all on the aim ?  
In the heart of man is the undiscovered earth  
Whose hope's our compass ; sweet with glorious  
passion

Of men's good-will ; a world to forge and  
fashion

Worthy the things we have seen and brought  
to birth.

Taps of the Drum ! Now once again they beat :  
And the answer comes ; a continent arms.  
Dread,

Pity, and Grief, there is no escape. The call  
Is the call of the risen Dead.

Terrible year of the nations' trampling feet !  
An angel has blown his trumpet over all  
From the ends of the earth, from East to utter-  
most West,

Because of the soul of man, that shall not fail,  
That will not make refusal, or turn, or quail,  
No, nor for all calamity, stay its quest.

And here, here too, is the New World, born of  
pain

In destiny-spelling hours. The old world breaks  
Its mould, and life runs fierce and fluid, a stream  
That floods, dissolves, re-makes.

Each pregnant moment, charged to its extreme,  
Quickens unending future, and all's vain  
But the onward mind, that dares the oncoming  
years

And takes their storm, a master. Life shall then  
Transfigure Time with yet more marvellous men.  
Hail to the sunrise ! Hail to the Pioneers !

## THE SOWER

*(Eastern France)*

FAMILIAR, year by year, to the creaking wain  
Is the long road's level ridge above the plain.  
To-day a battery comes with horses and guns  
On the straight road, that under the poplars  
runs,

At leisurely pace, the guns with mouths declined,  
Harness merrily ringing, and dust behind.  
Makers of widows, makers of orphans, they  
Pass to their burial business, alert and gay.

But down in the field, where sun has the furrow  
dried,

Is a man who walks in the furrow with even  
stride.

At every step, with elbow jerked across,  
He scatters seed in a quick, deliberate toss,  
The immemorial gesture of Man confiding  
To Earth, that restores tenfold in a season's  
gliding.

He is grave and patient, sowing his children's  
bread :

He treads the kindly furrow, nor turns his head.

## STONEHENGE

GAUNT on the cloudy plain  
Stand the great Stones,  
Dwarfed in the vast reach  
Of a sky that owns

All the measure of earth  
Within its cloud-hung cave.  
Dumb stands the Circle  
As on a God's grave.

But clattering with horses  
Up from the valley,  
With horses and horsemen  
At a trot, gaily

Dragging the limbered guns,  
Youth comes riding,—  
Easy sits, mettlesome  
Horses bestriding.

## STONEHENGE

Fast come the twinkling hoofs,  
Light wheels and guns,  
Invading the upland,  
And sweep past the Stones.

Giant those shapes now  
Over them tower,—  
Time's dark stature  
Over Youth's fleet hour.

Ribs of dismemoried Earth,  
Guard what you may !  
The Immortals also  
Pass, nor stay.

## GUNS AT THE FRONT

MAN, simple and brave, easily confiding,  
Giving his all, glad of the sun's sweetness,  
Heeding little of pitiful incompleteness,  
Mending life with laughter and cheerful chiding,

Where is he?—I see him not, but I hear  
Sounds, charged with nothing but death and  
maiming ;

Earth and sky empty of all but flaming  
Bursts, and shocks that stun the waiting ear ;

Monsters roaring aloud with hideous vastness,  
*Nothing, Nothing, Nothing!* And man that  
made them

Mightier far than himself, has stooped, and  
obeyed them,

Schooled his mind to endure its own aghastness,

Serving death, destruction, and things inert,—  
He the soarer, free of heavens to roam in,

He whose heart has a world of light to home in,  
Confounding day with darkness, flesh with dirt.

O, dear indeed the cause that so can prove him,  
Pitilessly self-tested ! If no cause beacons  
Beyond this chaos, better he bled unreckoned,  
With his own monsters bellowing madness above  
him.



## THE WITNESSES

### I

LADS in the loose blue,  
Crutched, with limping feet,  
With bandaged arm, that roam  
To-day the bustling street,

You humble us with your gaze,  
Calm, confiding, clear ;  
You humble us with a smile  
That says nothing but cheer.

Our souls are scarred with you !  
Yet, though we suffered all  
You have suffered, all were vain  
To atone, or to recall

The robbed future, or build  
The maimed body again  
Whole, or ever efface  
What men have done to men.

## II

Each body of straight youth,  
Strong, shapely, and marred,  
Shines as out of a cloud  
Of storm and splintered shard,

Of chaos, torture, blood,  
Fire, thunder, and stench :  
And the savage shattering noise  
Of churned and shaken trench

Echoes through myriad hearts  
In the dumb lands behind ;—  
Silent wailing, and bitter  
Tears of the world's mind !

You stand upon each threshold  
Without complaint.—What pen  
Dares to write half the deeds  
That men have done to men ?

## III

Must we be humbled more ?  
Peace, whose olive seems  
A tree of hope and heaven,  
Of answered prayers and dreams,

Peace has her own hid wounds ;  
She also grinds and maims.  
And must we bear and share  
Those old continued shames ?

Not only the body's waste  
But the mind's captivities—  
Crippled, sore, and starved—  
The ignorant victories

Of the visionless, who serve  
No cause, and fight no foe !  
Is a cruelty less sure  
Because its ways are slow ?

Now we have eyes to see.  
Shall we not use them then ?  
These bright wounds witness us  
What men may do to men.

## I AM HERE, AND YOU

I AM here, and you ;  
The sun blesses us through  
Leaves made of light.  
The air is in your hair ;  
You hold a flower.

O worlds, that roll through night,  
O Time, O terrible year,  
Where surges of fury and fear  
Rave, to us you gave  
This island-hour.

## DARK WIND

IN the middle of the night, waking, I was aware  
Of the Wind like one riding through black wastes  
of the air,  
Moodily riding, ever faster, he recked not where.

The windows rattled aloud : a door clashed and  
sprang ;  
And the ear in fear waited to feel the inert clang  
Strike the shaken darkness, a cruelty and a  
pang.

I was hurt with pity of things that have no will  
of their own,  
Lifted in lives of others and cast on bruising  
stone :  
I feared the Wind, coming a power from worlds  
unknown.

It was like a great ship now, abandoned, her  
crew dead,  
Driving in gulfs of sky ; it staggered above and  
sped ;  
I lay in the deeps and heard it rushing over  
my head.

And the helpless shaking of window and door's  
desolate rebound  
Seemed like tossing and lifting of bodies lost  
and drowned  
In the huge indifferent swell, in the waters'  
wandering sound.

## HUNGER

I COME among the peoples like a shadow.  
I sit down by each man's side.

None sees me, but they look on one another,  
And know that I am there.

My silence is like the silence of the tide  
That buries the playground of children ;

Like the deepening of frost in the slow night,  
When birds are dead in the morning.

Armies trample, invade, destroy,  
With guns roaring from earth and air.

I am more terrible than armies,  
I am more feared than the cannon.

Kings and chancellors give commands ;  
I give no command to any ;

But I am listened to more than kings  
And more than passionate orators.

I unswear words, and undo deeds.  
Naked things know me.

I am first and last to be felt of the living.  
I am Hunger.



## STRIKE STONE ON STEEL

STRIKE stone on steel,  
Fire replies.  
Strike men that feel,  
The answer is in their eyes.

Powers that are willed to break  
The spirit in limbs of pain,  
See what spirit you wake !  
Strike, and strike again !

You hammer sparks to a flame,  
And the flame scorches your hand.  
You have given the feeble an aim,  
You have made the sick to stand.

You shape by stroke on stroke  
Man mightier than he knew ;  
And the fire your hammer woke  
Is a life that is death to you.

## SPRING HAS LEAPT INTO SUMMER

SPRING has leapt into Summer.  
A glory has gone from the green.  
The flush of the poplar has sobered out,  
The flame in the leaf of the lime is dulled :  
But I am thinking of the young men  
Whose faces are no more seen.

Where is the pure blossom  
That fell and refused to grow old ?  
The clustered radiance, perfumed whiteness,  
Silent singing of joy in the blue ?  
—I am thinking of the young men  
Whose splendour is under the mould.

Youth, the wonder of the world,  
Open-eyed at an opened door,  
When the world is as honey in the flower, and  
as wine  
To the heart, and as music newly begun !

O the young men, the myriads of the young men,  
Whose beauty returns no more !

Spring will come, when the Earth remembers,  
In sun-bursts after the rain,  
And the leaf be fresh and lovely on the bough,  
And the myriad shining blossom be born :  
But I shall be thinking of the young men  
Whose eyes will not shine on us again.

## THE ENGLISH YOUTH

THERE is a dimness fallen on old fames.  
Our hearts are solemnized with dearer names  
Than Time is bright with : we have not heard  
    alone,  
Or read of it in books ; it is our own  
Eyes that have seen this wonder ; like a song,  
It is in our mouths for ever. There was wrong  
Done, and the world shamed. Honour blew the  
    call ;  
And each one's answer was as natural  
And quiet as the needle's to the pole.  
Who gave must give himself entire and whole.  
So, books were shut ; and young dreams shaken  
    out  
In cold air ; dear ambitions done without,  
And a stark duty shouldered. And yet they  
Who now must narrow to their arduous day  
Did not forget their nurture, nor the kind  
Muses of earth, nor joys of eager mind,—  
Graced in their comradeship, and prizing more  
Life's beauty, and all the sweetness at the core,

Because of that loathed business they were set  
To do and finish. It was the world's debt,  
Claiming all: but they knew, and would not wince  
From that exaction on their flesh; and since  
They did not seek for glory, our hearts add  
A more than glory to that hope they had  
And gloriously and terribly achieved.

O histories of old time, half-believed,  
None needs to wrong the modesty of truth  
In matching with your legend England's youth.  
But all renown that fearless arms could win  
For proud adventuring wondrous Paladin  
Is glimmering laurel now: Romance, that was  
The coloured air of a forgotten cause  
About the heads of heroes dead and bright,  
Shines home. We are accompanied with light  
Because of youth among us; and the name  
Of man is touched with an ethereal flame;  
There is a newness in the world begun,  
A difference in the setting of the sun.  
Oh, though we stumble in blinding tears, and  
though  
The beating of our hearts may never know  
Absence in pangs more desolately keen,  
Yet blessed are our eyes because they have seen.

## OXFORD IN WAR-TIME

WHAT alters you, familiar lawn and tower,  
 Arched alley, and garden green to the grey wall  
 With crumbling crevice and the old wine-red  
     flower,  
 Solitary in summer sun ? for all

Is like a dream : I tread on dreams ! No stir  
 Of footsteps, voices, laughter ! Even the chime  
 Of many-remembered bells is lonelier  
 In this neglected ghostliness of Time.

What stealing touch of separation numb  
 Absents you ? Yet my heart springs up to adore  
 The shrining of your soul, that is become  
 Nearer and oh, far dearer than before.

It is as if I looked on the still face  
 Of a Mother, musing where she sits alone.  
 She is with her sons, she is not in this place ;  
 She is gone out into far lands unknown.

Because that filled horizon occupies  
 Her heart with mute prayer and divining fear,  
 Therefore her hands so calm lie, and her eyes  
 See nothing ; and men wonder at her here :

But far in France ; on the torn Flanders plain ;  
 By Sinai ; in the Macedonian snows ;  
 The fly-plagued sands of Tigris, heat and rain ;  
 On wandering water, where the black squall  
     blows

Less danger than the bright wave ambushes,  
 She bears it out. All the long day she bears  
 And the sudden hour of instant challenges  
 To act, that searches all men, no man spares.

She is with her sons, leaving a virtue gone  
 Out of her sacred places : what she bred  
 Lives other life than this, that sits alone,  
 Though still in dream starrily visited !

For O in youth she lives, not in her age.  
 Her soul is with the springtime and the young ;  
 And she absents her from the learned page,  
 Studios of high histories yet unsung,

More passionately prized than wisdom's book  
Because her own. Her faith is in those eyes  
That clear into the gape of hell can look,  
Putting to proof ancient philosophies

Such as the virgin Muses would rehearse  
Beside the silvery, swallow-haunted stream,  
Under the grey towers. But immortal verse  
Is now exchanged for its immortal theme—

Victory ; proud loss ; and the enduring mind ;  
Youth, that has passed all praises, and has won  
More than renown, being that which faith  
divined,  
Reality more radiant than the sun.

She gave, she gives, more than all anchored days  
Of dedicated lore, of storied art ;  
And she resigns her beauty to men's gaze  
To mask the riches of her bleeding heart.



## THE DEAD TO THE LIVING

O YOU that still have rain and sun,  
Kisses of children and of wife  
And the good earth to tread upon,  
And the mere sweetness that is life,  
Forget not us, who gave all these  
For something dearer, and for you.  
Think in what cause we crossed the seas !  
Remember, he who fails the Challenge  
Fails us too.

Now in the hour that shows the strong—  
The soul no evil powers affray—  
Drive straight against embattled Wrong :  
Faith knows but one, the hardest, way.  
Endure ; the end is worth the throe.  
Give, give, and dare ; and again dare !  
On, to that Wrong's great overthrow.  
We are with you, of you ; we the pain  
And victory share.

## KITCHENER

THIS is the man who, sole in Britain, sole  
In Europe, by profounder instinct, knew  
The strength of Britain ; and that strength he  
drew

Slow into act, upshouldering the whole  
Vast weight of effort. Eyes full on the goal  
Saw nothing less ; he held his single clue,  
Heedless of obstacle ; intent to do  
His one task forthright with unshaken soul.

This is the man whom, dead, the meanest match  
With their own stature ; give tongue, and grow  
brave

On the imperfection fools have wit to espy.  
His silence towers the grander for their cry,  
Troubling his fame no more than yelp and  
scratch

Of jackal could disturb that ocean-grave.

## THE TEST

NAKED reality, and menace near  
As fire to scorching flesh, shall not affright  
The spirit that sees, with danger-sharpened  
sight,

What it must save or die for ; not the mere  
Name, but the thing, now doubly, trebly dear,  
Freedom ; the breath those hands would choke ;  
the light

They would put out ; the clean air they would  
blight,

Making earth rank with hate, and greed, and  
fear.

Now no man's loss is private : all share all.  
Oh, each of us a soldier stands to-day,  
Put to the proof and summoned to the call ;  
One will, one faith, one peril. Hearts, be high,  
Most in the hour that's darkest ! Come what  
may,

The soul in us is found, and shall not die.

## YPRES

SHE was a city of patience ; of proud name,  
Dimmed by neglecting Time ; of beauty and  
loss ;

Of acquiescence in the creeping moss.

But on a sudden fierce destruction came  
Tigerishly pouncing : thunderbolt and flame  
Showered on her streets, to shatter them and  
toss

Her ancient towers to ashes. Riven across,  
She rose, dead, into never-dying fame.

White against heavens of storm, a ghost, she is  
known

To the world's ends. The myriads of the brave  
Sleep round her. Desolately glorified,  
She, moon-like, draws her own far-moving tide  
Of sorrow and memory ; toward her, each alone,  
Glide the dark Dreams that seek an English  
grave.

# INTO PEACE



## THE ARRAS ROAD

### I

THE early night falls on the plain  
In cloud and desolating rain.  
I see no more, but feel around  
The ruined earth, the wounded ground.

There in the dark, on either side  
The road, are all the brave who died.  
I think not on the battles won ;  
I think on those whose day is done.

Heaped mud, blear pools, old rusted wire,  
Cover their youth and young desire.  
Near me they sleep, and they to me  
Are dearer than their victory.

## II

Where now are they who once had peace  
Here, and the fruitful tilth's increase ?  
Shattered is all their hands had made,  
And the orchards where their children played.

But night, that brings the darkness, brings  
The heart back to its dearest things.  
I feel old footsteps plodding slow  
On ways that they were used to know.

And from my own land, past the strait,  
From homes that no more news await,  
Absenting thoughts come hither flying  
To the unknown earth where Love is lying.

There are no stars to-night, but who  
Knows what far eyes of lovers true  
In star-like vigil, each alone  
Are watching now above their own ?



## III

England and France unconscious tryst  
Keep in this void of shadowy mist  
By phantom Vimy, and mounds that tell  
Of ghostliness that was Gavrelle.

The rain comes wildly down to drench  
Disfeatured ridge, deserted trench.  
Guns in the night, far, far away,  
Thud on the front beyond Cambrai.

But here the night is holy, and here  
I will remember, and draw near,  
And for a space, till night be sped,  
Be with the beauty of the dead.

## CAMBRAI

THE silence is a thing to feel and fear ;  
It is so human that it hurts the mind  
With all that is not, and that was, behind  
These gaping walls, this murdered blankness.

Here

To have had pity on the prisoner  
Was penal ; and like engines set to grind  
Spirit from flesh, the oppressors toiled to find  
Weakness, rejoiced if they could wring a tear.

The houses seem to bleed round the great square,  
The silence is so living and intense.

Yet what moves most my heart ? Not the dead  
stare

Of Hate, full-gluttred in its hideous will :  
It is the thought of Hate's dull impotence,  
It is the glory of all it cannot kill.

## AN INCIDENT AT CAMBRAI

IN a by-street, blocked with rubble  
And any-way tumbled stones,  
Between the upstanding house-fronts'  
Naked and scorched bones,

Chinese workmen were clearing  
The ruins, dusty and arid.  
Dust whitened the motley coats,  
Where each his burden carried.

Silent they glided, all  
Save one, who passed me by  
With berry-brown high-boned cheeks  
And strange Eastern eye.

And he sang in his outland tongue  
Among those ruins drear  
A high, sad, half-choked ditty  
That no one heeded to hear.

Was it love, was it grief, that made  
For long-dead lips that song ?  
The desolation of Han,  
Or the Never-Ending Wrong ?

The Rising Sun and the Setting,  
They have seen this ail as a scroll,  
Blood-smeared, that the endless years  
For the fame of men unroll.

It was come from the ends of the earth  
And of Time in his ruin gray,  
That song,—the one human sound  
In the silence of Cambrai.

OCTOBER, 1918.

## THE UNRETURNING SPRING

A LEAF on the gray sand-path  
Fallen, and fair with rime !  
A yellow leaf, a scarlet leaf,  
And a green leaf ere its time.

Days rolled in blood, days torn,  
Days innocent, days burnt black,  
What is it the wind is sighing  
As the leaves float, swift or slack ?

The year's pale spectre is crying  
For beauty invisibly shed,  
For the things that never were told  
And were killed in the minds of the dead.

## A DEDICATION

THE thousands of the brave, the happy young,  
Our loves and lovers, fallen in France, have  
    shrined

That earth for us, and France's name comes  
    kind

On English lips. But you, her children, sprung  
From the old liberal soil, so rudely wrung,  
Out of our own hard pain have we divined  
Your harder pain ; hurt body and tortured  
    mind,

Where those polluting claws have torn and  
    clung.

France, dear to men that honour human things,  
To have helped or heartened any of these your  
    maimed

And homeless, is itself felicity :

It is to know what suffering man can be ;  
How great his heart, when fed from splendid  
    springs ;

What human virtue has made you loved and  
    famed.

## AN ANTHEM OF THE FIVE NATIONS

O GOD, our race of old went forth,  
Our seed about the world is sown  
From East to West, from South to North ;  
But, mother and children, we are one.  
Now we have passed the furnace-fire  
And seen the souls of men to shine,  
Lift up our hearts to thy desire,  
Confirm our faltering wills with thine ;  
    One faith to keep, one hope to reap,  
    One life to share, one death to dare.

Who glories when another cowers  
Before him on a bended knee,  
His heart has never beat with ours ;  
The free alone can lead the free.  
To make a world of men that feel  
The wrong of each the wrong of all,  
And joy of man our Commonweal,—  
Behold our great adventure's call !  
    From North afar to Southern star,  
    For this the dead together bled.

O God of all our children, hew  
From us the stone that they shall build  
To beauty grander than we knew,  
Our effort in their songs fulfilled.  
Make strong our hand and heart ! Preserve  
The vision and the will that frees  
Within our spirits that proudly serve—  
The Sister Nations of the Seas :  
    One faith to keep, one hope to reap,  
    One life to share, one death to dare.



## PEACE

## I

LOVELY word flying like a bird across the narrow  
seas,

When winter is over and songs are in the skies,  
Peace, with the colour of the dawn upon the  
name of her,

A music to the ears, a wonder to the eyes ;  
Peace, bringing husband back to wife and son  
to mother soon,

And lover to his love, and friend to friend,  
Peace, so long awaited and hardly yet believed  
in,

The answer of faith, enduring to the end ;  
Tears are in our joy, because the heavy night  
is gone from us

And morning brings the prisoner's release.  
How shall we sing her beauty and her blessed-  
ness,

Saying at last to one another, *Peace ?*

## II

Guns that boomed from shore to shore  
And smote the heart with distant dread  
Speak no more.

The terror that bestrode the air,  
That under ocean kept his lair,  
Now is fled.

## III

I see, as on a misty morn  
When a great ship towering glides  
To anchor, out of battle borne,  
And looms above her dented sides,—  
Burning through the mist at last  
The sun flames on her splintered mast  
And the torn flag that from it floats,  
And cheering from a thousand throats  
Bursts from her splendour and her scars,—  
So I see our England come,  
Come at last from all her wars  
Proudly home.

## IV

Now let us praise the dead that are with us  
to-day,

Who fought and fell before the morning  
shone,

Happy and brave, an innumerable company ;  
This day is theirs, the day their deeds have  
won.

Glory to them, and from our hearts a thanks-  
giving

In humbleness and awe and joy and pride.

We will not say that their place shall know no  
more of them,

We will not say that they have passed and  
died :

They are the living, they that bought this hour  
for us

And spilt their blood to make the world  
afresh ;

One with us, one with our children and their  
heritage,

They live and move, a spirit in the flesh.

## V

With innocence of flowers and grass and dew  
Earth covers up her shame, her wounds, her rue.  
She pardons and remits ; she gives her grace,  
Where men had none, and left so foul a trace.  
Peace of the earth, peace of the sky, begins  
To sweeten and to cleanse our strifes and sins.  
The furious thunderings die away and cease.  
But what is won, unless the soul win peace ?

## VI

Not with folding of the hands,  
Not with evening fallen wide  
Over waste and weary lands,  
Peace is come ; but as a bride.  
It is the trumpets of the dawn that ring ;  
It is the sunrise that is challenging.

## VII

Lovely word, flying like a light across the happy  
Land,

When the buds break and all the earth is  
changed,

Bringing back the sailor from his watch upon the  
perilled seas,

Rejoining shores long severed and estranged,  
Peace, like the Spring, that makes the torrent  
dance afresh

And bursts the bough with sap of beauty  
pent,

Flower from our hearts into passionate recovery  
Of all the mind lost in that banishment.

Come to us mighty as a young and glad deliverer

From wrong's old canker and out-dated lease,  
Then will we sing thee in thy triumph and thy  
majesty,

Then from our throes shall be prepared our  
peace.

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